

# **Request for Proposal (RFP) for Evaluating the Kent County Pilot Project**

## **Questions and Answers from the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO)**

1. Will funding be available to compensate focus group participants?

**SCAO's Response:** Yes. In your proposal, specify the estimated costs.

2. If an online survey is used for data collection, will the evaluator be able to secure e-mail addresses for litigants, court employees, division judges, referees, and members of the Kent County Citizen Advisory Committee?

**SCAO's Response:** SCAO has no objection to using e-mail surveys to gather data. The Kent County court should be able to provide e-mail addresses for court employees, division judges, referees, and members of the Kent County Citizen Advisory Committee. However, the court does not currently collect e-mail addresses for litigants.

3. Should separate focus groups be conducted for friend of the court employees and other court personnel?

**SCAO's Response:** SCAO will defer the structure of the focus groups to the evaluator. Your proposal should include recommendations for how the focus groups should be structured.

4. Can the evaluator gather focus group (litigants, court staff, and attorneys) information with secure online web surveys, phone calls, emails, and/or mailings?

**SCAO's Response:** Yes. The RFP should describe how these data collection methods will be used.

5. Will there be training for attorneys (Kent County Family Law Section), parents, court staff, etc. about the parenting time plan prior to the start of the project?

**SCAO's Response:** Training for this pilot project will be the responsibility of the Kent County court. The evaluator that is selected can speak with court staff regarding training issues.

6. Will Kent County court employees be responsible for gathering pilot project data, and will comparison court employees or SCAO be responsible for gathering data for non-pilot cases?

**SCAO's Response:** Your proposal should identify the data elements and data gathering techniques necessary to successfully evaluate the pilot project. We anticipate that the Kent County court will compile some specified data, but until the needed data elements are identified by the evaluator we are unable to provide more detail. Your proposal may provide assumptions with regard to data collection and provide a cost based upon those assumptions.

7. What is the total amount of funding budgeted to evaluate the pilot project?

**SCAO's Response:** SCAO believes that it has secured adequate funding to successfully evaluate the Kent County Pilot Project.

8. Is Human Subject Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) approval required for all evaluators, or only those who are employed by or associated with a state college or university?

**SCAO's Response:** The evaluator who is retained to evaluate the Kent County Pilot Project will be required to secure HSIRB approval. SCAO is not limiting responses to academic institutions.

9. What is the projected payment structure?

**SCAO's Response:** SCAO will make quarterly payments for the first year of the contract if all contractual obligations have been met. SCAO will make two bi-annual payments for the second year of the contract. The first bi-annual payment will be made after the first six month period of the second year if the evaluator demonstrates to SCAO satisfactory progress in evaluating the Kent County Pilot project. The second bi-annual payment will be made when the final evaluation report is submitted to SCAO.

10. What are the pilot project requirements of the test group?

**SCAO's Response:** The test group will be required to use parenting plans and the nonadversarial court order language.

11. Will court orders entered for pilot project using the nonadversarial language be in compliance with statutory requirements (federal and state) and Michigan Court Rules? Will it be possible to use the 2008 Michigan Child Support Formula Manual for determining child support for the pilot project cases?

**SCAO's Response:** Yes, the pilot project will be in compliance with state and federal law, as well as the Michigan Court Rules. The pilot project will incorporate the use of nonadversarial terms such as "mother" or "parent" instead of "plaintiff" or "defendant." However, the use of nonadversarial language will not change the roles of parents as custodians for purposes of any state or federal law for which custody is required to be determined. Judgments and orders produced in the pilot project will clearly delineate how custody is to be determined for purposes of state and federal laws that require a person to be designated as a custodian. This pilot project will not change how child support is determined for pilot project cases using the 2008 Michigan Child Support Formula Manual.

12. Will SCAO develop and distribute pilot project pleading forms and court order forms? Will the evaluator who is retained have access to those forms?

**SCAO's Response:** There are no new SCAO approved forms for use in this pilot project. However, we understand that the Kent County court has developed pleading forms and court order forms for this pilot project. They have not been made available to the public and will not be made available to an evaluator until after one is selected.

13. Will MiCSES extracts be made available and has the ticket request been entered for the data needed for this project?

**SCAO's Response:** Yes, SCAO anticipates that MiCSES extracts will be made available to the evaluator. A MiCSES request has not been made. The evaluator selected will first need to identify the data elements before any MiCSES or other data requests are made.

14. How will pilot cases and non-pilot cases be selected? Will the evaluator have access to data from the control group?

**SCAO's Response:** It is SCAO's understanding that pilot cases will be the first 700 divorce with children court cases filed within a specific time period. These court cases will be required to use the parenting plans and the nonadversarial language. It has not yet been determined how the non-pilot cases will be selected. Your proposal should identify how the non-pilot cases should be selected.